

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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WSP Implementing Statewide Organ/Tissue Replacement Program

On November 1, the Washington State Patrol **began** implementing a **statewide** procedure to notify Tissue Recovery agencies—including the Northwest Tissue Center and the Northwest Lions Eye Bank—of possible donors. The tissue agencies will be provided contact information for a victim's family, after confirming next of kin notification has occurred, so that a family has the opportunity to give improved quality of life, or even life itself, to another.

The program was conceived by veteran Washington State Patrol Detective Steve Stockwell of the Criminal Investigation Division's Bremerton office in 2002 when he had occasion to assist with a death notification in rural Lewis County. Stockwell was told by the victim's father that he believed that his son would wish to be a donor. Stockwell then found that there was no effective procedure to link requests to law enforcement to an appropriate tissue agency.

Stockwell initiated an internal Problem Oriented Public Safety (POPS) program to make that link. The Washington State Patrol's Communications Division partnered with Detective Stockwell, the Northwest Tissue Center, and the Northwest Lions Eye Bank to implement the system.

Beginning November 1, 2003 whenever a fatality collision occurs that is investigated by the Washington State Patrol, the Patrol's local Communications Center will automatically advise the donor referral line of the possible donors.

Hospitals have had such a procedure in place for a number of years, but a law enforcement procedure for making notification of deaths that occur outside of hospitals has been lacking. Now persons who choose to be tissue donors will have a better chance of having their wishes honored.

Washington State Patrol troopers respond to all fatalities on interstates and state routes, and county roads when requested by the local county sheriff. Washington State Patrol detectives respond to those fatalities that have potential for felony charges. Detective Stockwell's POPS project has provided a mechanism for the Washington State Patrol to assist the Northwest Tissue Center and the Northwest Lions Eye Bank with their goal of providing the family of a victim an opportunity to turn some of our community's most heart-wrenching tragedies into new life for others.

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